

Message Text

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46

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 L-03 EB-07 SCA-01 H-02 INR-07

DLOS-06 PRS-01 CG-00 DOTE-00 SS-15 TRSE-00 COME-00

SAL-01 OES-06 SAB-01 NSC-05 PM-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 SP-02 /082 W

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R 081330Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8367

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 4750

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: SEIZURE OF THE SEA WOLF

REF: STATE 140338

1. GREATLY APPRECIATE DEPT'S CONCURRENCE IN EMBASSY RECOMMENDATION THAT FOLLOW-UP TO "SEA WOLF" MATTER CONSIST OF INFORMAL DEMONSTRATION TO GOP POLICY-MAKERS AND CONCERNED OFFICIALS OF DAMAGE PANAMA DOES TO ITSELF IN JURISDICTIONAL INCIDENTS, RATHER THAN FORMAL DIPLOMATIC PROTEST.

2. TO DATE, WE HAVE PROVIDED COPIES OF MATERIAL POUCHED TO US, INCLUDING SEN. HELMS' SPEECH ON THIS INCIDENT, TO FOLLOWING: FOREIGN MINISTER BOYD; FONMIN DIRECTOR OF RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES CARLOS GARAY; INFORMATION ADVISER TO CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT VELARDE; ADVISER TO FOREIGN MINISTRY LOPEZ-GUEVARA. WE HAVE DISCUSSED THIS CASE, AND GENERAL SUBJECT OF COUNTERPRODUCTIVE NATURE OF SIMILAR JURISDICTIONAL INCIDENTS WITH COMMANDER OF NATIONAL GUARD MARINE ELEMENT (MAJ. MOTTA) AND WITH SEVERAL OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS IN NATIONAL GUARD.

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3. REACTIONS HAVE GENERALLY CONFIRMED EMBASSY'S INITIAL CONCLUSION THAT THE "SEA WOLF" MATTER WAS A CASE WHERE GOP ACCIDENTALLY BLUNDERED INTO A JURISDICTIONAL SITUATION. ALL PARTIES CONTACTED SAID THEY APPRECIATED OUR EXPLANATION OF SERIOUSNESS OF SUCH INCIDENTS, AND APPRECIATED ALSO THAT HOWEVER THEY OCCURRED, THEY DID GOP CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE WITHIN US AT A TIME WHEN SUCH DAMAGE WAS HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE. ALL CONCERNED HAVE AGREED THAT BOTH US AND PANAMA SHOULD TAKE ANY POSSIBLE MEASURES TO AVOID SITUATIONS WHERE JURISDICTIONAL CONFLICTS COULD OCCUR.

4. COMMENT: WHILE WE WILL NOT CEASE MAKING THIS POINT AROUND PANAMA, EMBASSY VIEW ON BASIS OF THESE CONVERSATIONS IS THAT PANAMA WILL BEND AS FAR OVER BACKWARDS AS POSSIBLE WITHOUT PUBLIC EMBARRASSMENT TO AVOID PRECIPITATING JURISDICTIONAL INCIDENTS OF THIS TYPE IN THE FUTURE. WE CONSIDER THAT--PERHAPS PARADOXICALLY--OUR HAND IN THIS WAS CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHENED BY FACT THAT WE DID NOT PRESENT A FORMAL PROTEST NOTE, BUT ORALLY MADE IT CLEAR THAT OUR PROTEST WAS NOT JUST LEGALISTIC OR FOR THE RECORD, BUT VERY PRACTICAL AND AIMED AT PRECLUDING SITUATIONS WHICH WERE AS ADVERSE TO PANAMA'S INTERESTS AS TO OUR OWN. END COMMENT.
JORDEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SHIP DETENTION, SEA WOLF, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: blochd0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PANAMA04750
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760263-0998
From: PANAMA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760779/aaaacrny.tel
Line Count: 86
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 140338
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: blochd0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 JUL 2004 by MartinML>; APPROVED <28 OCT 2004 by blochd0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SEIZURE OF THE SEA WOLF
TAGS: PFOR, PN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006